WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 MAY 1999

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

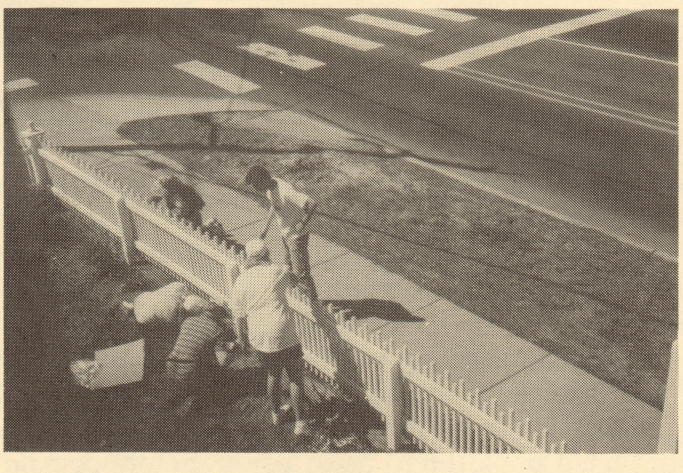
KAREN'S COLUMN:

FIRST PIANO IN MICHIGAN WEST OF DETROIT FEATURED AT MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE

We are looking forward to the Open House, *"Meet the Museum on Main Street—A Sneak Preview"* on Sunday, May 23. Preparations are being made! We will be cutting the cake with the cake knife used by Edith Staebler Kempf in 1982 when the Society celebrated its 125th anniversary.

Although the *"Sneak Preview"* will focus mostly on the restoration of the museum house, we do plan to have a few interesting artifacts on display. One will be the Chapin piano. This piano came to Washtenaw County in May of 1827, the first piano to be brought west of Detroit. It was donated to the

Continue on page 5.



(1) Upper picture: Joseph F.C. Lam, director of the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments, shows Ann Arbor's first piano which will be at museum opening May 23. The piano came by ox team in 1827.

(2) Lower picture: Members of the Professional Volunteer Corps are shown painting the Museum's picket fence recently.

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

We hope you have marked your calendar to plan to attend the Sneak Preview Opening of the Museum on Main Street.

Our May General Meeting will be the Sneak Preview of the Museum on Main Street.

Members, friends and the public are invited. Refreshments will be served. A tent will be erected in our parking lot.

We have permission on Sunday, May 23, to park on the west side of North Main Street (the side opposite to our Museum) between 1:30 and 5:00 p.m.

Permanent exhibits will be installed in the Fall; we will have special items on display for this special occasion.

WCHS HAS 50% OF KNAPP'S POINTS TOWARD GOAL

WCHS has now collected 10,184 Bill Knapp's Restaurant points toward more acid-free materials to safely store textiles thanks to members and friends. That is 50% of our goal of 19,125 points.

Anyone who eats at Knapp's may request a yellow points slip from the cashier each time. One point is given for each dollar spent. Please give or send to Alice Ziegler, 537 Riverview Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

WCHS ANNUAL MEETING POT LUCK WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

WCHS will gather at the Pittsfield Union Grange, located at 3337 Ann Arbor Saline Road. It is situated on the east side of the road, just south of the intersection of Ann Arbor-Saline and Oak Valley Roads, approximately ¼ mile south of I-94 interchange.

Beverages and table service will be provided for the potluck. Please bring a dish to pass for 8 to 10 persons.

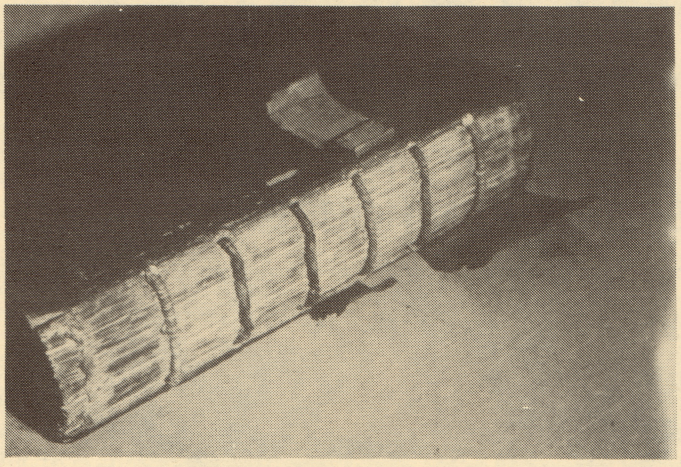
Dr. Elizabeth Brabec will present a talk on *"Historic Landscapes: Protecting Our Heritage and Our Quality of Life."*

Urban sprawl is the number one land use issue in America today. The Ann Arbor region is experiencing the brunt of its effects, leading to a loss of character and sense of place in our communities. The presentation will review success stories from other communities who have preserved their historic resources in the face of urban sprawl.

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE SNEAK PREVIEW OF OUR MUSEUM on MAIN STREET 500 N. MAIN STREET at BEAKES SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1999 2 TO 5 PM RIBBON CUTTING AT 2:30

JIM CRAVEN PRACTICES AN ANCIENT ART

Today's speaker, James Craven, has been with the Bentley Historical Library, where he is conservator of books and manuscripts, for twenty-six years. He introduced Sheon Montgomery, one of his students; Julie Fremuth, conservator at the Clements Library; and Ann Flowers, a conservator colleague at the Bentley.



Pictures courtesy of James Craven

***Coke's Commentary on Littleton*, a 1628 law book badly in need of repair.**

"Today we are here to talk about books. There is little that's really new in this business. We have to remember that the technology for binding books was probably beginning to be laid down 2,000 years ago in the Western world," Jim told the Washtenaw County Historical Society's April audience.

"In library terms, there are conservation, preservation, and restoration. Preservation encompasses the whole umbrella of how books and papers are treated within the library and archives," Jim Craven said. "A conservator is more or less stopping the damage and making repairs that are suitable to the book. Restoration involves bringing an item back to the way you think it was originally.

"When we restore a book, we like to get from the owner or person most involved how he values it and what he is going to do with it. The value of a book may be as a historical artifact, as a research source, as a sentimental item, or it may be worth a lot of money."

Mr. Craven showed a book that was bound some years ago in a class he presented called, 'Binding the Antique Book.'

"We developed that lecture/demonstration to give students an idea of how a book like that, with 3/4 leather and raised bands on the spine, had been bound. A book like that takes many hours to bind. That is one end of the spectrum." He showed another book, one that looked quite sturdy and plain.

"The other end of the spectrum is a book bound by a library binder. This is the kind of book you would get from a public library. It will maybe circulate out of the library 50 to 100 times. That's like someone carrying it around for two years in his hands or bicycle basket.

"The library binding is one way to bind a book for hard use like that. Again, in deciding on the best treatment for a book, one has to ask where its value lies and how it will be used.

"We put some bindings in the cases here in the meeting room, bound in styles that are no longer done. One, the ledger style, was the kind Bob Cratchit could have been working on when he had his troubles over Christmas.

"Another book on display demonstrates the use of stringing or cording, forming the leather over a design laid out on the cover with hemp cord. We thought it was a brand new procedure until we read about a book that was dug up with St. Cuthbert about the year 400, the Stonyhurst Gospel, that has become an object of veneration. It, too, has stringing or cording.

"With another book on display we may have made a contribution to the art of bookbinding in that there was a piece of engraved whale ivory in the center of the cover."

This book was bound by Craven's students (at that time), Ann Flowers and Susan Sanford, roughly duplicating the presentation binding Jim had made for the occasion of Howard Peckham's retirement from the Clements Library.

That book, of course, had gone away with Mr. Peckham, but this one gave Jim one of his own. Before these two books, Jim said, "I haven't seen a whale's tooth on any other book, so maybe that is something new."

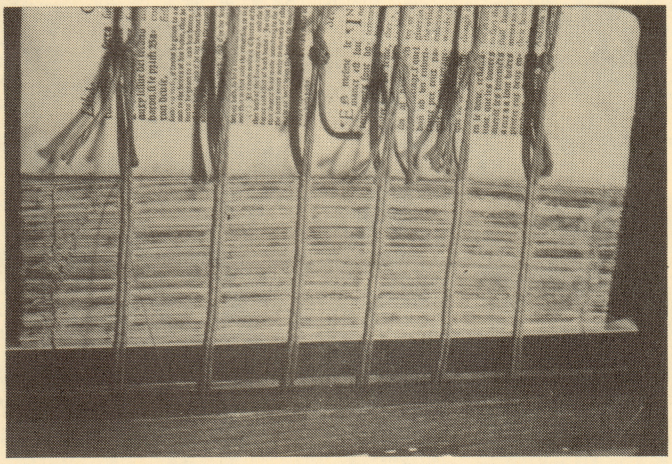
Removing his sport jacket, Jim said, "I will change now from James Craven, raconteur, to James Craven, conservator. I worked for a number of years as a bookbinder before coming to the Bentley Historical Library to be a conservator. I found that bookbinders wear aprons; but when you are a conservator, you get to wear one of these snazzy shop coats."

Noting some smudges on the coat, he said, "It's a bit of a tool itself. When working with pastes and glues, it's not always convenient to go and look for a rag or wash one's hands, so I wipe them on the coat.

"I have things in my shop coat pockets: a tape measure, a knife that has little snap-off blades." It reminded him of when he was a youth, when he used to break Gillette

razor blades in half, then in half again, to work on model airplanes made of balsa wood. "The Japanese have come up with a better idea: a little blade that you can snap off as many times as you like."

Continuing with the inventory of his pockets, he said, "I have a pencil here that one who deals with antique materials would use. It has a number two lead. It's virtue is that if you make a mark on something, you can erase it. We discourage pens."



Restoration under way.

He next showed a tool called a bone folder. "Its name comes from the good old days when they made books by hand. The printer printed on the largest sheet of paper his press would take, then folded it into smaller sheets, as desired. They used this tool to make the crease."

Starting the slide presentation of the restoration of a book belonging to the University of Michigan Law Library, Jim recalled his conversation with the librarian in charge of it. "By way of warning me to be careful of it, this is a 17th-century law book, Coke's Commentary on Littleton.

"Talk about value! I was assured that if this book came to misfortune ,the whole of Judeo-Christian civilization would come tumbling down around our ears!

"The first thing we do is examine the book and document its condition. We take pictures, candid shots, of what we do.

"We can see that the back of the book is pretty well missing except for a little bit here and a little bit there. It is sewed over a number of raised bands.

"Of the headbands or end bands on top and bottom, one is missing, one partly there. You will notice that the cover is nothing really special. It is calfskin. It has no special decoration or ornamentation, plus it has suffered from application of various kinds of adhesive tapes: some plastic, some cloth. We make note of all of that."

Mr. Craven then presented a detailed, step-by-step slide show of the restoration of this law book. The slides told the story.

"This particular book has what is called laced-on boards. That is the sewing part, the hemp cords that the book is sewn over, attached to the boards of the book. We're beginning to decide the book will have to be re-sewn. The boards are more or less attached but, as a bookbinder would say, the slips are broken.

"We have a kind of a motto--I guess it was stolen from the medical profession. When we work on things like this, we try to 'Do No Harm.' We also have a little prayer: 'Deliver me from the thing that somebody else has fixed.'

"From the 1940s or so, we have repairs made with adhesive tapes, both plastic and cloth. One of the problems of using cellophane tapes is that they have what is called a slow-flow adhesive. It differs from an Elmer's Glue, animal glue, or wheat paste, which are static; they stay there. Sticky tapes are susceptible to capillary action and the adhesive can soak into the paper.

"There was also a lot of brown paper tape, lick and stick, that was also used by previous repairers.

"One of the things we do is count pages to make sure they sent us everything. We want to send back everything we received. Of course, pages are usually consecutive, but we found an anomaly where there was a discontinuity in numbering.

"Some of the pages of this 1628 book are a bit damaged and certainly a little bit brittle.

"There are some torn pages and there is a nip out of the corner of the title page.

"For page repair we are going to do what we call leaf casting, a form of making or remaking paper.

"We use quality papers in our shop. We throw off-cuttings into a box. Every once in a while, we make little snippets of them, boil them up for a period of time, put them into a blender and turn them into a paper slurry.

"We lay the paper to be repaired on a window screen in a tray of water. We pour our slurry over that. Water filters through the screen, going every place that is not occupied by the paper. Where the water goes, it deposits paper fibers on the screen. We are rather proud of how this came out.

"It was decided to wash the pages of the book, that is, to immerse them in water and gently, gently move the sheets up and down a little bit. It is more soaking than agitated washing.

"On occasion, one would put a drop or two of detergent to act as a surfactant and help the water penetrate a little better. Mainly, it is soaking. We use water filtered for particles and chemicals and softened.

"What we are doing is soaking out some of the dirt, also some of the sizing. An example of a paper without sizing is a blotter. It soaks up all the ink immediately and feathers out at the edge of the image.

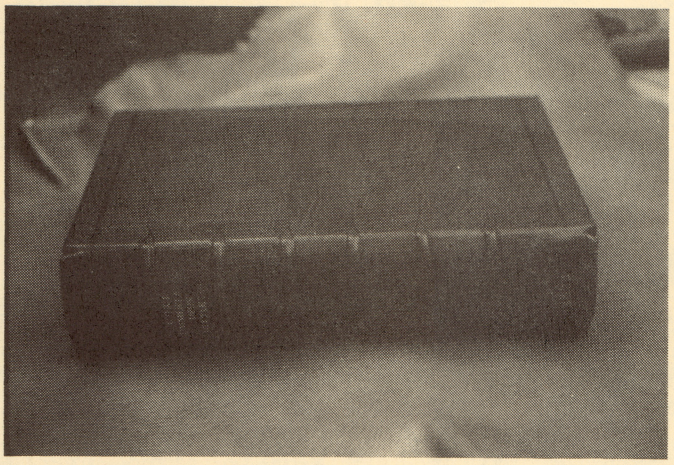
"In order to get a clear image, one would size the paper with something. In the case of something this old, it was probably sized with an animal product of some kind, either using scraps of parchment that may have been left over from a parchment maker or some gelatin that may have been rendered from an animal of some kind. That kind of sizing was used on the surface of the paper.

"They started to have internal sizing in the 1800s, coming along with the Industrial Revolution. Paper was sized as it was being made. Some of the substances used for sizing in those days now cause problems for conservators like ourselves.

"Washing the paper, the intent is to remove the original sizing. One of the things that happens when you remove the sizing is that it causes the paper fibers to rise a little bit. To lay them flat again, we resized the sheets with a cellulose product and put them on racks to dry.

"The racks are just wooden frames wound with nylon fishing line. The racks are staggered as they are stacked and the pile is covered with plastic, open at the ends to form a breeze tunnel. We place a fan in front of the stack, under the plastic, to pull air away from the frames and toward the dehumidifier.

"Here we have spread all the pages out. Now the trick is to put them all back together in their proper order. In this picture, the book is laid out in its signatures."



Book restored.

By way of background explanation, Mr. Craven said, "A signature is a folded section of a book. A printer wants to print as large a piece of paper as his press can handle; he may print between four and eight pages on a sheet of paper.

"In the old days, the sheet was then folded by a person who used a bone folder to make the creases, and folded again, as many times as necessary to get the whole section oriented properly. When the folding was done, the folder would make a little mark on the top sheet so that the foreman would know who did it if it was not folded properly (this is the origin of the term 'signature'".

Showing a stack of pages whose signature folds had been reinforced with spun nylon, Mr. Craven said, "You can see that a fair number of repairs were needed inside the book, reinforcing the signature folds. One of the reasons we used spun nylon in this repair is that it is very flexible, very strong, and very thin.

"When the book is put all in order, then we get into the sewing. This book was originally bound with six cords. We use flax cords for longevity.

"We make the raised bands by sewing the signatures over several groups of two cords each. With the sewing thread, we do a figure-eight stitch. That means that the thread comes out between the two cords, is wrapped around both, and then goes back in all through the same hole in the center of the signature. The sewing of this book included adding new end papers."

Mr. Craven went on to show the preparation of the boards and the slips, lacing the slips into holes punched in the boards, sewing the headbands, lining the spine, preparing the leather, covering the boards and the spine with the leather, tying up the book and pressing, and stamping the title and other tooling.

"In this business of book conservation, everything is saved and everything goes back to the owner or custodian of the book. We also make a conservator's report, documenting how we received the book, what treatment we performed on it, and what materials we used.

"Here is our final slide showing the finished book!"

CPR FOR BOOKS

In library terms there's conservation, preservation, and restoration under the whole umbrella of how books and papers are treated within the library and archives, Jim Craven said.

The conservator asks, "Can this book go to a book drop? Does this book go to a bookbinder? Does it go to a copy machine? Are people told how to remove books from shelves?

A preservationist is more or less stopping to repair damage in time.

In restoration you get involved in bringing it back to the way you think it was.

KAREN'S COLUMN

(Continued from page 1.)

Society in 1940 by Lucy E. Chapin, the great-granddaughter of Mrs. Hannah Clark.

Mrs. Clark was the early settler who brought the piano west by ox-cart, for her daughter, Lucy Ann Clark. The piano has been in the care of the University of Michigan Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments since 1940, as the Society did not have a place for it. In 1972 the Society restored the piano. It was returned to storage with other Stearns instruments.

Those who come to the open house will have the opportunity to see and hear the piano, (though it is not in very good tune!). This November the Stearns Collection will celebrate its 100th anniversary. It seems an appropriate time to bring out this rare and historic musical instrument, as we celebrate the restoration of our museum and as we become more aware of another special collection in our community--The Stearns Collection.

On May 1, the Professional Volunteer Corps painted our picket fence. This group's members volunteer for a wide variety of one-day projects for charitable causes in the greater Ann Arbor area and participate in regular PVC socials.

A singles group, it meets regularly at the NEW Center the second Friday of each month. At these meetings they decide which projects they will undertake. We were lucky they were able to help us out. About ten of their members worked steadily from 9:30 AM to 1 PM, and got the job done. If you would like to know more about this group, the phone number is 734-747-6801.

Karen Koykka O'Neal
734-665-2242

CORRECTION: MIX-UP OF THE TWO LAURAS

In the March 1999 Impressions the editor mistakenly referred to Laura Greiner Marz as having lived in the MoMS museum house when it was at 1015 Wall Street. Actually, two Lauras lived there.

Laura #1 was Laura Greiner. The Greiners bought 1015 Wall Street about 1890 and lived there until about 1915 according to city directories.

Laura #2 was the daughter of Fred and Anna Bauer who bought 1015 Wall Street about 1915. After Laura Bauer married John Marz on May 12, 1920 the Bauers shared the house with the Marzes.

The Bauers and Marzes continued to live there the rest of their lives. Laura, the last of the two couples died in 1988. The Marz's son, Kenneth, sold the house to the University of Michigan.

THREE RUTHRUFF SONS SERVED IN CIVIL WAR

Civil War news must have been eagerly awaited in the Ruthruff home because three of Samuel's sons served in the war.

Edwin the 8th child, was in the Second Michigan Infantry and John, the 11th child in the Twentieth Michigan Infantry according to the *Washtenaw County History*.

Samuel, Jr., the second child, served in the Co.C of the 17th Kansas Infantry Post 424 GAR.

The Second Infantry is said to have participated in "many of the most desperate battles of the war." The 20th, composed of about half Washtenaw men, participated in 30 battles and skirmishes. The unit left Jackson for Washington September 1, 1862, and was disbanded at Jackson June 9, 1865.

CHRONOLOGY 1015 WALL STREET

1837 – 1844
Kellogg and Warden families

1853 – 1877
Ruthruff family

1890 – 1915
Charles G. Greiner family

1915 – remainder of their lives
Fred and Anna Bauer

1920 – 1998
Laura Bauer married John Marz

The Marzes shared the house with the Bauers and Laura died in 1988. The Marz's son, Kenneth, sold the house to the University.

CERTIFICATES OFFERED

Hand lettered certificates, framed if desired, are offered free of charge, by WCHS to organizations, businesses, churches, schools etc. for milestone anniversaries. Information: 663-8826.

WHAT'S IT? GAME, LOANBOXES OFFERED BY WCHS

WCHS offers traveling exhibits of small artifacts, set up as humorous *"What's It?"* games to schools for children and another for adults. They are available free for classes and meetings.

Loan Boxes, *"Life Before Electricity"* and *"From Hats to Spats"* are available to teachers for a $15 rental charge. Information: Sally Silvennoinen, Education Chair, (734) 971-5086 or (734) 662-9092.

ARTIFACTS TO DONATE?

Anyone wishing to donate an artifact to WCHS may contact:

Judy Chrisman, collections chair, at 734-769-7859 or by mail, 1809 Dexter Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

AROUND THE COUNTY

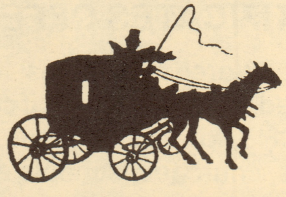
Chelsea Historical Society: The Depot Museum is open 1-3 p.m. Saturdays or by appointment, 475-7047.

Pittsfield Society: The new society is seeking suggestions for inexpensive speakers, programs and projects to start with. They ask that other societies put them on their mailing list at P.O Box 6013, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Saline Society: Depot Museum open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays or by appointment, 429-9621. New Rentischler Farm Museum open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. May 15, 16.

Ypsilanti Society: Museum, 220 N. Huron St., open 2-4 p.m. Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Archives open 9 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday.

Automotive Heritage Museum in Depot Town open 2:30-6 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and noon-5 p.m. Sunday.



This issue of the *Washtenaw Impressions* is cosponsored by: E R I M and Dahlmann

TWO SIGNATURE QUILTS:

A BIT OF LOCAL WHO'S WHO OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY NAMES

The Washtenaw County Historical Society will now have not one but two quilts to display in the Museum thanks to a gift from the estate of Sarah Jacobs Malcolm donated by Karl Malcolm.

The other one is the quilt now being finished and donated by the University of Michigan Faculty Women's Quilting Group bearing contemporary signatures.

The 1883 quilt from the Malcolms is a colorful crazy quilt on one side with signatures on the reverse. It also has a red satin ruffle around it and a stitched on ribbon reading, "Souvenir Detroit Art Fair Association, September and October 1883."

Sarah Malcolm was the daughter of Loretta Beal Jacobs and grand-daughter of Junius E. Beal and Ella Travis Beal. Junius (died 1942) was the longest serving University of Michigan Regent. He was raised by his uncle, Rice Beal (died 1883), Phoebe Beal was his aunt.

Some of the signatures, besides the prominent Beal family, include Goodyear, Ferdon, Worden, Mrs. Ingalls, Mary Ticknor, Wagner and J. J. Quarry, along with a drawing of a druggist's mortar and pestle.

The Beal quilt was used to cover the caskets of Mrs. Malcolm's mother, Loretta Beal Jacobs and sister, Loretta Jacobs Edwards.

The wedding dress and coat of Mrs. Malcolm's grandmother, Ella Travis Beal, was also donated.

CONGRATULATIONS, PEGGY

Peggy Haines, Washtenaw County Clerk and Register of Deeds who is also a member of the WCHS Board of Directors, was recently presented the Athena Award by the Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce.

The award, given annually, "acknowledges the person in the community who does the most to advance women's causes and business issues." Congratulations Peggy!

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Post Office Box 3336
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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL POTLUCK
'HISTORIC LANDSCAPES'
SPEAKER
DR. ELIZABETH BRABEC
6 p.m. • Wednesday
June 16, 1999
PITTSFIELD UNION GRANGE
3337 Ann Arbor-Saline Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 96
Ann Arbor, MI

YPSILANTI MUSEUM
220 N HURON ST
YPSILANTI MI 48197-2516